

Washington, DC -- U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan voted today to deny taxpayer-funded retirement benefits to Members of Congress convicted of certain felonies. The Member Pension Act (H.R. 476), which would strengthen current law by revoking the pensions of U.S. Representatives and Senators convicted of felonies directly related to their service in Congress.

"American taxpayers should not have to foot the bill for the retirement of convicted felons," said Buchanan. "This bill would prevent sitting Members of Congress who violate the public trust by committing a felony related to their official duties from receiving their federal pension. I hope the Senate will strengthen this bill to deny federal benefits to any congressional felon. "

Currently, only a conviction of treason or espionage is grounds for forfeiture of a Congressional pension. The pension bill would also strip Members of Congressional pensions if convicted of:

- Bribery of public officials;
- Acting as an agent of foreign principals;
- Conspiring to commit bribery or defraud the United States;
- Committing perjury in relationship to the felonies listed above; and
- Member's pension will be revoked in the event of one Member attempting to influence another Member to commit perjury

Buchanan cosponsored stronger legislation that denied federal pensions to Members convicted of any of 21 felonies. The House-passed bill would take effect immediately after its enactment.